

THE IRISH WOLFHOUND



An Illustrated Standard.

*I will give thee a dog which I got in Ireland.
He is huge of limb and for a follower equal to an able man.
Moreover, he hath a man's wit and will bark at thine enemies but never thy friends.
He will see by each man's face whether he be ill or well disposed towards thee,*

From the Saga of Nial, 970-1014

FIWC Illustrated Standard Presentation June 2018

FIWC Congress

Jocelyne Gagné

Note that when delivered at the Congress, this speech was accompanied by a Powerpoint presentation.

June 9, 2018

Welcome. My talk will be a short one, so that you won't have to wait long to see the actual Illustrated Standard. It will be distributed at the end of this presentation.

Many of you know me; this is my 7th Congress, and for those of you who don't, I have had Irish Wolfhounds for over 40 years, and also have owned several other sighthounds. When I come to these Congress events I connect with so many good friends, that it feels like coming home to me. However, in spite of my attendance at past congresses, this is the first time that I am attending as a representative of the Irish Wolfhound Club of Canada, as I currently serve as President of that club. We are pleased, as a Club, to now be an associate member of the FIWC.

I am honoured to have been asked by the Irish Wolfhound Club of Ireland to present to you today and introduce you to the Illustrated Standard of the FIWC.

This started when the Federation of Irish Wolfhound Clubs discussed developing a "tool"; something short and educational that could be shared with judges that would impart the essentials of our breed. So it started with the "Desirable Characteristics" a 4 page leaflet that can be downloaded and printed from the FIWC website. This document was developed by the same 4 people who worked on and developed the Illustrated Standard. Betty Murphy, Jim Behan, Outi Piisi Putta, and myself. I am the only member of this group present at the Congress this year.

I would like to share with you a little bit about Betty, who was our leader in this project.

Betty's interest in the Standard goes way back to the early 1960's. She was anxious to learn as much as possible, as quickly as possible, so that she could earn her parents' permission to get her first Irish Wolfhound. She vowed that when she learned, she would share her knowledge with all who were interested in our beloved Irish Wolfhound. Betty has tried to do this to the best of her ability over the past 50+ years. Some of you might not know that John Briggs was the breeder of Betty's first Irish Wolfhound. And my friend John Briggs introduced me to the European Irish Wolfhound Club, by arranging for me to attend my first event, in Belgium, back in 2002. We owe a lot to John and his dedication to the breed.

Betty has asked me to relay the following to you: *"I am indebted to Jim, Jocelyne and Outi for working on this project with me. Especially to Jim, who spent endless hours looking for suitable photos and found it difficult to avoid the over-angulated hindquarters sadly so fashionable these days. Thank you, dear friends, for making this possible.*

We have included the posters of UK Champions of the past to remind breeders that Irish Wolfhounds are sighthounds. We have tried to show typical hounds to illustrate the Standard.

The Irish Wolfhound Club of Ireland holds the Irish Wolfhound and its Standard in trust for future generations. We invite all countries to share and cherish our historical treasure."

I would ask you to keep Betty's words in mind as you read the Illustrated Standard.

In compiling this document, to be used as a tool for new Irish Wolfhound owners, experienced breeders, and judges of our breed we have included quotes from knowledgeable Irish Wolfhound breeders, some history to lay a foundation and a focus on function – PLEASE, never forget that an Irish Wolfhound is a SIGHTHOUND.

We have tried to make the connection to the past for our breed, regarding their purpose dictating their form and structure.

Here we have the famous Renai gle wolfhound. This is the symbol of the FIWC and it signifies strength, power, athleticism and commanding appearance. There is no mistaking this hound for anything other than a powerful sighthound hunter.

We have tried to share good photos of early Irish Wolfhounds, that demonstrate that they are sighthounds, covering ground and exemplifying desired type. We hope that the photos we chose will provide you with excellent examples. In reviewing some of the historical references, we want to remind you that these should all still be applicable to our modern day Irish Wolfhound.

When we go back to review Captain Graham's ideal, we must appreciate the general appearance and type. There is really only ONE TYPE; while there may be different "looks" or "styles" all within the correct type. We worked hard to focus on the positives when we chose the photos to use in our publication, and we wanted to make sure we used good examples to demonstrate what an Irish Wolfhound should look like. We hoped to leave people with an image of good quality wolfhounds.

Historical descriptions should still be applicable today. Our breed has a unique and discerning personality, with their temperament a significant part of what makes a wolfhound a wolfhound.

The standard is a blueprint, and is a great tool. As a judge, I use standards constantly and value detailed descriptions. As a breeder, the standard gives us the ideal to be aimed for in our breeding programs. In producing the Illustrated Standard, we tried to provide detailed explanations relating to the purpose and structure of our breed. Our description and our photos included some differences and variances but still hounds of correct type, and in adherence with the Standard.

The Illustrated Standard includes a variety of visual aids, all of which we hope provide good examples, using both photos and sketches of what is ideal in our breed. We tried to focus on GOOD pictures, and to imprint in one's mind what is correct for an Irish Wolfhound.

We chose to promote type and soundness in the Illustrated Standard, and avoid the "fads of the day". For me a Sighthound is only as good as its legs, and my colleagues shared in this philosophy and our approach was to provide you with examples of how an Irish Wolfhound is always a sighthound; endorsing once again that the form follows function.

Please remember that one of the most important things in any hound is BALANCE. In a hound, all of the parts should fit together in harmony and make a complete, and correct package. We tried to demonstrate that movement is influenced by structure.

With respect to General Appearance, we used schematics and diagrams to help explain that it is not just anatomy, but how the body parts fit and work together that will create the final impression.

In this document, all of the parts as noted in the Standard are described in more detail, with photographs and sketches. Even with respect to things such as head carriage and furnishings, and different colours ; we tried to provide the variety that still fits within the spectrum of what is acceptable and desirable in terms of the Standard.

Throughout the Illustrated Standard, we keep returning to the Irish Wolfhound's purpose, and how the body and its structure is impacted and dictated by this purpose.

Another key element that we touched on is that of typical temperament in our beloved breed.

This Illustrated Standard was developed based on the current FCI Standard. It will, however, essentially apply to the "new" standard also, as we developed the Illustrated Standard with the thought that a new Standard was pending. There are not any significant changes that would alter what we have produced.

In closing, I would once again like to quote Betty Murphy, in saying that " we enjoyed preparing this Illustrated Standard for you and hope that you find it interesting and informative".